

State of Alaska
FY2003 Governor's Operating Budget

Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Vocational Rehabilitation
Budget Request Unit Budget Summary

Vocational Rehabilitation Budget Request Unit

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BRU Mission

The mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment and to maintain suitable employment.

BRU Services Provided

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is a combined federal/state program under the authority of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998. The services provided to accomplish individualized goals of each person with a disability include a full array of vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services, support and assistance in employment, assistive technology, and referrals. In partnership with other state agencies, private sector businesses, vendors, and non-profit organizations, individuals are assisted and encouraged in realizing their potential and personal independence as full participants and citizens in their community. Employers are provided trained and willing workers able to do the job. The division also provides training to employers on hiring practice changes and training and assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The division adjudicates claims on behalf of the Social Security Administration for Title II and Title XVI applicants for disability benefits and provides referrals for services. In addition, the division is the agency responsible for executive branch compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Administrative Order #129.

BRU Goals and Strategies

1) PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES THAT WILL ENABLE 537 INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO GET JOBS.

* The division will deliver direct vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities through a statewide structure of regional and branch offices.

* Access to information and services provided by the Division will be available on the Internet.

* Offices will also be co-located with other agencies providing employment services including the Employment Security Division, Job Training Partnership contractors, the Division of Public Assistance, and other non-profit organizations in "one-stop" job centers in Ketchikan, Juneau, Anchorage, Wasilla, Eagle River, Bethel, Kenai and Fairbanks.

* Services for Native Alaskans will be coordinated with Native organizations including Bristol Bay Native Association, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Tlingit-Haida Central Council, Cook Inlet Native Association, Kodiak Island Native Association, Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, and the Association of Village Council Presidents (Bethel).

2) EXPAND THE EXPERTISE AND SKILLS OF REHABILITATION PERSONNEL.

* Training programs will be designed and provided which will enable personnel to function in their jobs with improved knowledge of disability issues and which will correct identified deficiencies.

3) ENABLE ALASKANS WITH DISABILITIES TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY IN THE COMMUNITY OF THEIR CHOICE.

* The division will deliver independent living services statewide through grant agreements with private non-profit independent living centers.

* Specialized independent living services will be provided to older individuals who are blind through regional grants in Southeast, Gulf Coast, Anchorage/Mat-Su/Southwest, and the Northwest regions.

4) ENABLE ELIGIBLE ALASKANS WITH DISABILITIES TO RECEIVE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS.

* The division will adjudicate claims for Social Security benefits by obtaining medical and vocational evidence for claimants which will provide adequate information to determine eligibility for benefits.

5) PROVIDE SERVICES THROUGH SPECIAL PROJECTS, WHICH WILL ENHANCE AND SUPPORT THE GENERAL MISSION OF THE DIVISION AND MEET THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

* Using Supported Employment funding, the division will place and train severely disabled individuals in competitive employment positions.

* Sign language interpreter services will be provided through three regional grants to non-profit organizations that will respond to requests for interpreter referrals for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

* Through the Alaska Works Project, Resource Specialists will be located in One-Stop offices in Juneau, Fairbanks and Anchorage to assist individuals with disabilities who want to return to work but who need to maintain health insurance. A Business Development Specialist will work with employers to assist them in developing strategies to increase the presence of individuals with disabilities in their workforce. The Alaska Works Project will be supplemented with a new federal grant award: Alaska Work Incentives. With the award the division will enhance the employability, employment and career advancement of people with disabilities through enhanced service delivery in the One-Stop delivery system established under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

6) ENABLE ACCESS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO RESIDE THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

* The division will provide grant funding for an Assistive Technology Alliance.

7) ASSURE COMPLIANCE OF ALL AGENCIES IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF STATE GOVERNMENT WITH TITLE I AND II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.

* Training programs will be provided for program managers. Updated information will be provided on the status of state facilities audited for ADA compliance.

Key BRU Issues for FY2002 – 2003

- * Provide greater capacity in the One-Stop delivery system to effectively serve people with disabilities;
- * Continue to support counselors in meeting the federal requirements of a Masters Degree;
- * Increase efficiency and effectiveness under the Unified State Plan prompted by the Workforce Investment Act; and
- * Continue the advancement of Informed Choice in all facets of Vocational Rehabilitation services.

Major BRU Accomplishments in 2001

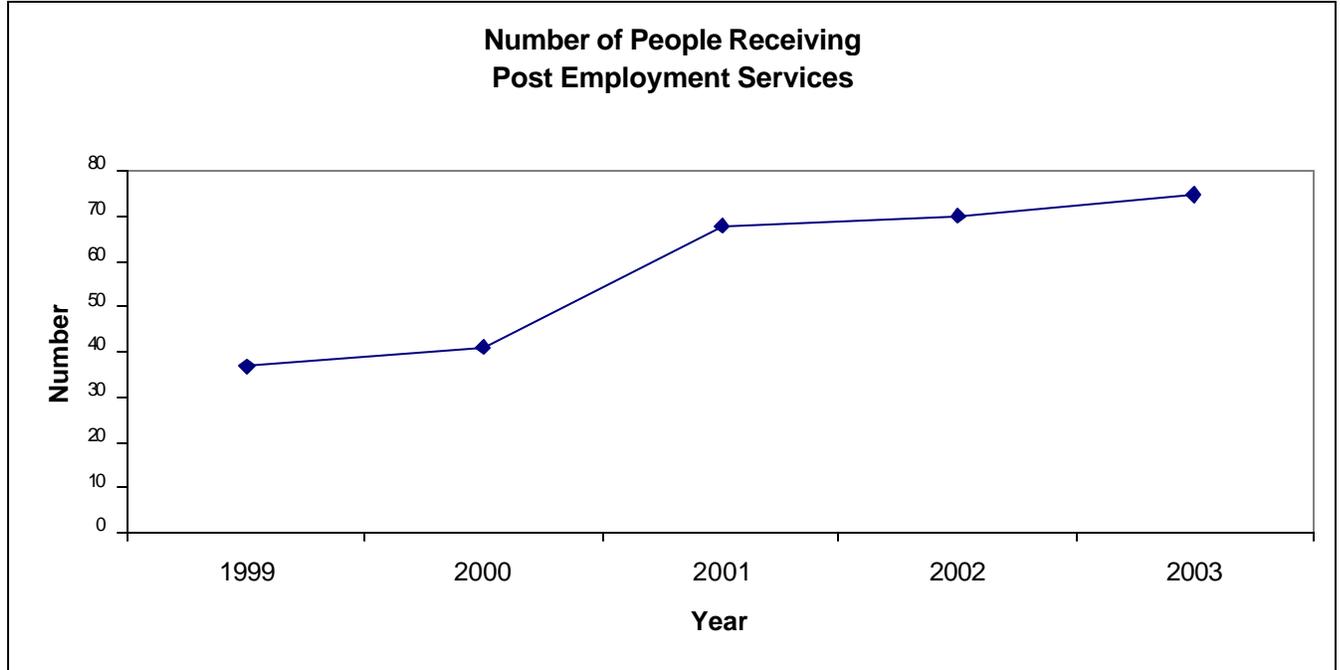
- * Provided services to 537 Alaskans with disabilities that enabled them to go to work and earn an average of \$20,425 per year;
- * Increased the involvement of the 4,219 individuals with disabilities served in FY 2001 in taking a lead role in their rehabilitation services;
- * Expanded the presence of Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation staff in Alaska Job Centers throughout the state;
- * Incorporated more accessible technology to determine the aptitudes and interests of people with disabilities in their career planning and employing community based job assessments; and
- * Continued collaborating with other employment program partners at the Alaska Job Centers.

Key Performance Measures for FY2003

Measure:

The number of people served in post-employment services.
Sec 92(b)(1) Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:



Provide clients post-employment services necessary to maintain, regain, or advance in employment. For state year FY01, 68 clients received post-employment services. In FY02, a target of 70 people will be provided post-employment services and 75 in FY03. In FY03 resources will be managed to provide post-employment services to all clients requiring services to maintain employment.

Benchmark Comparisons:

Post-employment services provided by other state vocational rehabilitation programs vary from state to state. Comparison between programs is not meaningful due to the nature of the services, diverse labor markets, and incomparable client populations.

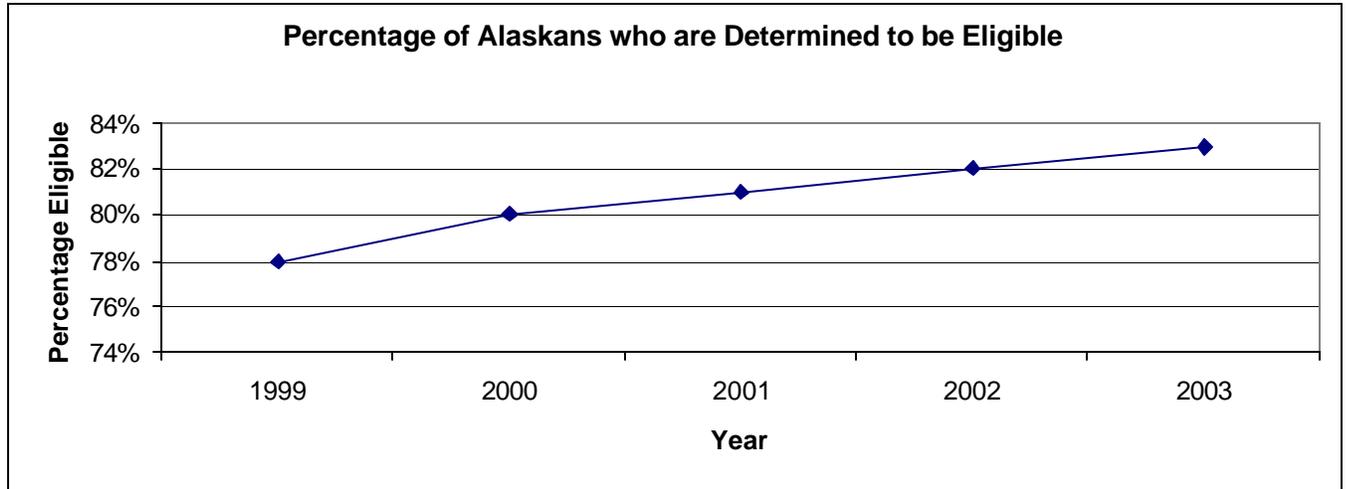
Background and Strategies:

Post-employment services are limited in scope and duration with the intention of ensuring that the employment outcome remains consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and interests. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors determine when post-employment services are required. All clients requiring post-employment services will receive services. Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to offer training to counselors to recognize post-employment challenges and identify allowable services.

Measure:

The percentage of Alaskans who apply for services compared to the number determined eligible and served.
 Sec 92(b)(2) Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:



Continue to serve all eligible clients. In FY01, 79.0% of Alaskans who applied for services received services as part of their Individual Employment Plan. No client eligible for services was denied services. In FY02 the program will work to increase the percentage of Alaskans who apply and become eligible to 82% and 83% in FY03.

Benchmark Comparisons:

The provisions of applicant eligibility under the US Department of Education Federal (USDOE) Regulations require the following determinations: the applicant has a physical or mental impairment, the impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment, the applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, and the services received will prepare the applicant to enter into, engage in, or retain gainful employment consistent with the applicant's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, and informed choice.

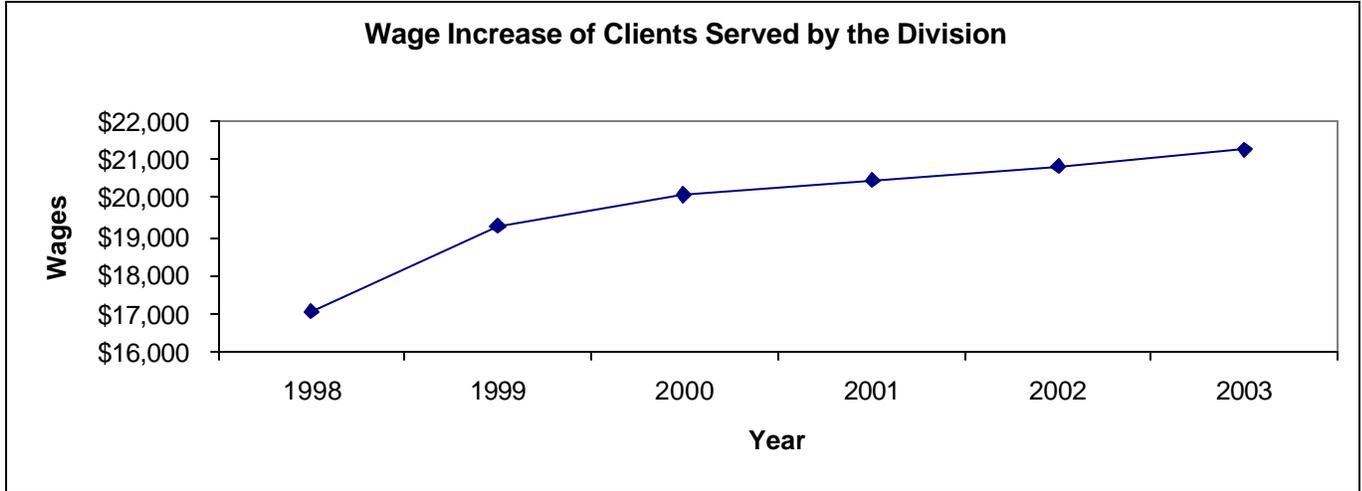
Background and Strategies:

Individuals interested in the program attend an orientation on the services provided by the program. When orientation strategies and materials are presented effectively, the number of applicants determined eligible increases. The orientation process screens individuals to determine if they need Vocational Rehabilitation services or services from other Workforce Investment programs. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors review applications and conduct assessments for determining eligibility of services.

Measure:

The increase in wages of clients who are served by the division.
 Sec 92(b)(3) Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:



Increase the annual wages of clients served. The average annual wage earned by Alaskans with disabilities that received services increased from \$20,084 in FY00 to \$20,425 in FY01. For FY02 and FY03 the program will work to increase the average annual wage by 2% each year. This would be to \$20,834 in FY02 and \$21,250 in FY03.

Benchmark Comparisons:

In FY98 the program established a base amount of \$17,062 for the average annual earnings of individuals with disabilities placed in the workforce.

Background and Strategies:

The program will consider that an individual has achieved an employment outcome when the following have been met:

- a) The provision of services under the individual's Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) contribute to the achievement of the employment.
- b) The employment is in the most integrated setting possible and is consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
- c) The individual has maintained the employment for a period of at least 90 days.

Counselors will emphasize placing clients in well paying jobs with employee benefits.

Measure:

The number of individuals who enter and retain employment for at least six months after receiving services from the division.

Sec 92(b)(4) Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:

The program currently monitors performance for federal requirements based on the percentage of individuals who enter and retain employment 90 days after receiving services from the division. In FY01 64% of the client were employed 90 days after receiving services. The division will work with other Workforce Investment Act partners in developing a process to report data on the number of individuals employed after six months of receiving services.

Benchmark Comparisons:

Data will be evaluated during FY02 and a benchmark will be established for July 1, 2002.

Background and Strategies:

Services will be delivered through partners in the Alaska Job Centers, Native organizations and other non-profit organizations.

Vocational Rehabilitation
BRU Financial Summary by Component

All dollars in thousands

	FY2001 Actuals				FY2002 Authorized				FY2003 Governor			
	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds	General Funds	Federal Funds	Other Funds	Total Funds
Formula Expenditures	None.											
Non-Formula Expenditures												
Client Services	3,148.4	7,598.3	229.3	10,976.0	3,173.4	8,662.9	382.3	12,218.6	3,203.9	8,727.4	365.0	12,296.3
Federal	5.5	31.0	0.0	36.5	5.6	50.7	0.0	56.3	5.6	50.7	0.0	56.3
Training Grant												
Voc Rehab	165.5	940.6	61.0	1,167.1	168.6	1,258.5	20.2	1,447.3	171.0	1,279.8	20.8	1,471.6
Administration												
Independent	582.0	682.5	162.5	1,427.0	676.9	770.8	142.5	1,590.2	676.9	770.8	145.1	1,592.8
Living												
Rehabilitat												
Disability	0.0	3,719.3	151.5	3,870.8	0.0	4,888.9	199.6	5,088.5	0.0	4,926.4	201.2	5,127.6
Determination												
Special Projects	82.9	879.6	273.9	1,236.4	85.8	2,615.8	154.1	2,855.7	85.8	1,526.6	154.1	1,766.5
Assistive	0.0	373.7	0.0	373.7	0.0	469.3	96.0	565.3	0.0	471.7	96.0	567.7
Technology												
Americans With	0.0	0.0	162.4	162.4	0.0	0.0	192.0	192.0	0.0	0.0	194.7	194.7
Disabilities												
Totals	3,984.3	14,225.0	1,040.6	19,249.9	4,110.3	18,716.9	1,186.7	24,013.9	4,143.2	17,753.4	1,176.9	23,073.5

Vocational Rehabilitation

Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2003

No service changes are anticipated.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Summary of BRU Budget Changes by Component

From FY2002 Authorized to FY2003 Governor

All dollars in thousands

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2002 Authorized	4,110.3	18,716.9	1,186.7	24,013.9
Adjustments which will continue current level of service:				
-Client Services	30.5	82.0	0.3	112.8
-Voc Rehab Administration	2.4	21.3	0.6	24.3
-Independent Living Rehabilitat	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.6
-Disability Determination	0.0	37.5	1.6	39.1
-Special Projects	0.0	8.7	0.0	8.7
-Assistive Technology	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.4
-Americans With Disabilities	0.0	0.0	2.7	2.7
Proposed budget decreases:				
-Client Services	0.0	-17.5	-17.6	-35.1
-Special Projects	0.0	-1,097.9	0.0	-1,097.9
FY2003 Governor	4,143.2	17,753.4	1,176.9	23,073.5